



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

JOINT COUNCIL AND REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: November 24, 2009

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers
Chair and Boardmembers

FROM: Housing and Redevelopment Division, Community Development
Department

SUBJECT: Plaza De La Guerra Infrastructure Concept Design Review And
Professional Services Agreement For Preliminary Design Services

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. That Council review the conceptual design for Plaza de la Guerra Infrastructure Improvements and declare it a project for purposes of environmental review;
- B. That the Agency Board authorize the Deputy Director to execute a Professional Design Services Agreement, subject to approval by Agency Counsel, with Campbell and Campbell in an amount not to exceed \$89,000, for preliminary design services for Plaza de la Guerra Infrastructure, and authorize the Deputy Director to approve expenditures of up to \$17,800 to cover any cost increases that may result from necessary changes in the scope of work; and
- C. That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Approving and Adopting the Findings Required by Health and Safety Code Section 33445 for the Funding of Capital Improvements to Plaza de la Guerra.

BACKGROUND:

In 2004, Council directed Redevelopment Agency staff to pursue conceptual design of infrastructure improvements for Plaza de la Guerra consistent with a list of specific elements (Attachment 1 - Council Direction). The firm of Campbell & Campbell was contracted to develop a design and in November 2006, staff returned to Council with concept illustrations to request clarification on the priority of certain elements. Council reconsidered the design parameters and directed staff to return with a more comprehensive concept.

In late 2007, a broader concept design (see Attachment 2) involving significant parking reduction, changes to De la Guerra Street and to the parking orientation between State and Santa Barbara Streets was presented to the following groups:

- Downtown Organization
- Downtown Parking Committee

- Historic Landmarks Commission
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Transportation and Circulation Committee
- General Public (Library Main Branch)
- Planning Commission

Overall reaction reflected very strong concern about the loss of parking, street circulation changes and potential cost. The possibility of an increase in the number of Plaza events and effect on surrounding businesses was raised as an operational issue.

Staff met with the Council Subcommittee and was asked to develop a concept more limited in scope that would be responsive to the original direction and would address concerns raised during the public process. The concept brought forth now is reduced in scope and addresses many of the concerns raised during the public process (see Attachment 3 – Concept, November 2009). Staff's opinion is that the concept proposal (i) meets the Council's desire to improve the Plaza while maintaining its character, (ii) addresses Council's charge for "safe interaction between pedestrians and automobiles" and (iii) addresses concerns expressed by the local business community through the Downtown Organization.

DISCUSSION

The concept proposal is a starting point to begin the environmental review process. Attachment 4 - Concept Elements, summarizes the features of the proposed concept. A few of the more notable elements are identified here:

Number of Parking Spaces – The concept proposes a total reduction of five (5) parking spaces within the U-road. Three spaces would be removed at the interplay between Storke Placita and the Plaza lawn. Two spaces would be removed from the pinch point at the U-road exit.

Parking Space Designations – Proposed changes to parking include converting the 75-minute parking along the U-road exit to 15-minute parking which would allow the recapture of the three spaces removed by Storke Placita.

U-road Grade – The street level is proposed to be raised to be flush with the Plaza lawn. De la Guerra Street would remain at the existing grade. The nature of the transition between the two grades is to be determined. Separation between vehicle and pedestrian areas could be accomplished through the placement of removable bollards.

Electrical Service Panel – The panel is proposed for relocation from the Plaza lawn to the southwest corner of the City Hall building.

The business community has expressed strong concern about potential changes to the Plaza that might lead to new events with more frequent closure of the Plaza. To address this concern, staff collaborated with the Downtown Organization (DO) to develop this latest concept iteration which they support (see Attachment 5 – Downtown Organization letter). Consideration of changes to the policies regulating events in the Plaza is outside of this concept proposal and would be a community-wide dialogue.

Construction duration and issues related to safety and business operations would be explored during the environmental review process.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

It is being requested that Council declare the concept design (outlined below) a project for purpose of initiating review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

“Plaza de la Guerra infrastructure improvements may include the following elements: (i) removal of five (5) parking spaces from the U-shaped access road, (ii) reallocation of parking designations, (iii) decorative sidewalks and pathways, (iv) replacement and realignment of the roadway surface, (v) use of bollards between vehicle and pedestrian areas, (vi) replacement and upgrade of underground utilities including electrical, water, gas and sewer lines, (vii) relocation of the electrical main panel from the lawn to a location adjacent to the City Hall building, (viii) landscaping improvements with a reduction in the area of lawn turf, and (ix) improvements to pedestrian amenities including lighting, new trash/recycling receptacles and newspaper racks.”

If the proposed project description is acceptable to Council, and Council desires to move forward with the concept, the project would undergo the environmental review process for analysis. Design development would continue through public meetings of the Historic Landmarks Commission with a focus on Council's overall goals and a balance of community interests. Contracts for related environmental review studies may require Council approval.

DESIGN CONSULTANT

Working with staff for the past three years, Campbell and Campbell has supplied several iterations of the concept plan and is very familiar with Plaza related issues and interests. Campbell and Campbell has provided a proposal at a cost of \$89,000 for preliminary design services and staff believes this is a reasonable proposal.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The Plaza de la Guerra Infrastructure Improvements project was initially funded with \$1 million in 2005 with the understanding that additional funding would be needed. In December 2008, through the Agency's Fiscal Year 2009 Capital Program, the Board appropriated an additional \$1.4 million to the project account for a total appropriation of \$2.4 million. Most recent estimates for the construction and materials portion of the project are approximately \$1.5 million with a total project cost including design, environmental review and construction management estimated at \$2.2 million. Total funding currently available to the project is \$2.2 million in the Agency's 2003A Tax Allocation Bond Fund.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 33445

Health and Safety Code section 33445 provides that a redevelopment agency may pay for the installation and construction of public improvements on public property if the legislative body consents to the use of funds and makes certain findings. The Plaza de la Guerra Infrastructure Improvement Project meets all of the required findings in Section 33445 because the proposed improvements are consistent with the Implementation Plan adopted pursuant to Health and Safety Code 33490 and are of

benefit to the Central City Redevelopment Project Area, as the project will enhance the existing public plaza and encourage pedestrian activity by locals and tourists in the immediate area. No other reasonable means of financing the improvements are available. In addition, the improvements to the roadway and sidewalk will help to eliminate blighting conditions by encouraging pedestrian activity in and around the area. An increase in these activities improves the vitality of the project area by encouraging economic activity by locals and visitors, which leads to additional public and private improvements, and thereby eliminates blight and the conditions that lead to blight.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The project will have its greatest impact on the environment at the point it begins construction. Recognizing the possible impacts, Agency sponsored capital projects incorporate environmentally responsible design and construction techniques including, but not limited to, the specification of recycled content building materials, construction debris recycling processes, and the use of drought tolerant landscaping. These techniques further the City's sustainability goals in a variety of ways specific to the individual project and include reducing waste, recycling, and reducing resource consumption.

- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. Council Direction, October 26, 2004
 2. Comprehensive Concept Design, 2007-2008
 3. Proposed Concept, November 2009
 4. Concept Elements
 5. Downtown Organization letter, October 14, 2009

PREPARED BY: Brian Bosse, Housing and Redevelopment Manager/MEA

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Casey, Community Development Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office

COUNCIL DIRECTION ON PLAZA DE LA GUERRA

October 26, 2004

Staff directed to proceed with the ***conceptual design of infrastructure improvements*** for the Plaza & Placita with the following project components:

- Replace sidewalks, install new ramps, and provide designated parking spaces to meet ADA standards;
- Relocate the electrical service structure off-site;
- Upgrade electrical power capacity to serve the needs of the Plaza for special events (e.g. Fiesta, concerts, etc.)
- Improve the landscaping with a consistent design for Storke Placita, City Hall and the Parking Lot; eliminate agapanthus near de la Guerra Street;
- Replace/upgrade the park benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike racks, lighting, news-racks, etc.;
- Provide an enclosure for trash and recycling bins, with capacity to serve properties and adjacent businesses;
- Design the roadway and interior lawn to function in a safe manner for both vehicles & pedestrians during large events;
- If necessary & feasible, improve storm water drainage;
- Improve signage (vehicle and pedestrian) in and around the Plaza and Storke Placita; and
- Improve the connection of the Plaza to Casa de la Guerra with raised crosswalks or distinctive materials.



Plaza de la Guerra – Comprehensive Concept 2007

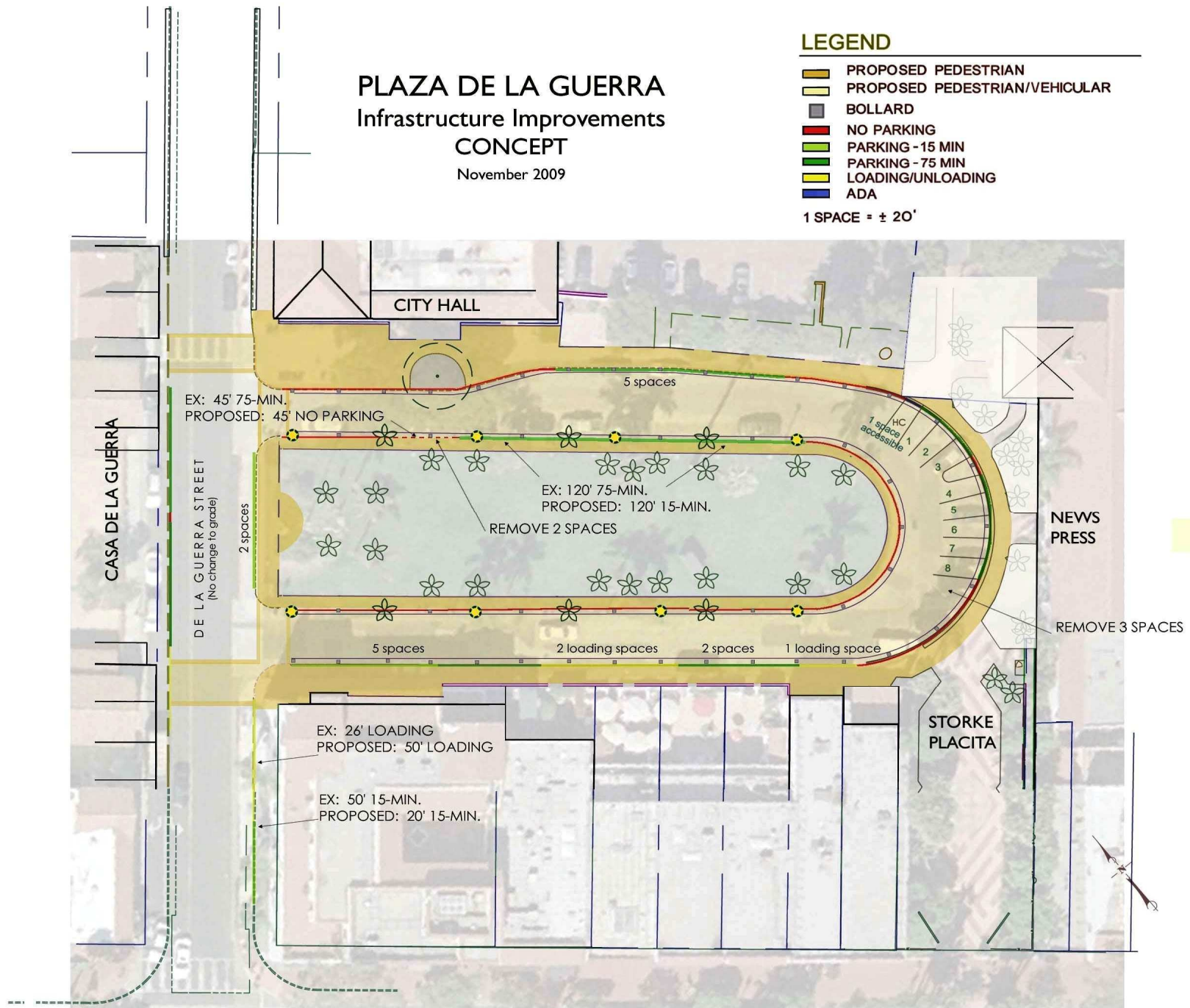
PLAZA DE LA GUERRA Infrastructure Improvements CONCEPT

November 2009

LEGEND

- PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN
- PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN/VEHICULAR
- BOLLARD
- NO PARKING
- PARKING - 15 MIN
- PARKING - 75 MIN
- LOADING/UNLOADING
- ADA

1 SPACE = ± 20'



Plaza de la Guerra Infrastructure Improvements – Concept Elements November 2009

- **Parking**
 - Net loss of five (5) spaces in the U-road
 - Two 75-minute spaces at exit by the California Pepper tree
 - Three 15-minute spaces at the Storke Placita & U-road interface
 - Convert 75-minute parking along the interior lawn to 15-minute parking (approximately six spaces)
 - Convert loading zone between U-road entry and exit to 15-minute parking
 - Lengthen existing 26-foot loading zone west of U-road entry to 50-feet
 - Reduce existing 50-foot 15-minute parking zone west of U-road to 20-feet.
- **U-road Grade**
 - Proposed to be raised to a level flush with the Plaza lawn.
- **Circulation on De la Guerra Street**
 - No changes proposed
- **De la Guerra Street Grade**
 - To remain unchanged. The extent of the grade transition between the street and the higher U-road to be determined.
- **Bollards**
 - Propose bollards along the interior and exterior of the U-road to separate pedestrian area from vehicle area.
- **Crosswalks**
 - Propose one pair of decorative crosswalks across De la Guerra Street and two other crosswalks at entry and exit of U-road.
- **Sidewalks**
 - Propose widening the existing sidewalk area by 3-1/2 feet (bollard separation). To maintain the roadway width, a commensurate amount of lawn area would be removed.
 - Propose a 5-foot wide hardscape path around the perimeter of the lawn to accommodate ADA
- **Landscape**
 - Removal of agapanthus on lawn adjacent De la Guerra Street
 - Minor reduction in turf to accommodate sidewalks (noted above)
 - Minor reduction in turf to accommodate ADA path on lawn (noted above)
 - Decrease in turf: 18% (17,500 square feet to 14,300 square feet)
 - Remove & replace two existing trees
 - Add three new trees
 - Minor, on-site relocation of several trees (to be determined)

(cont.)

Plaza de la Guerra Infrastructure Improvements – Concept Elements November 2009

- Utilities
Upgrade of gas, water, electrical and sewer lines. Relocation of tented, electrical panel on lawn to southwest corner of City Hall adjacent to bicycle parking.
- Trash / Recycling/ Compost Enclosure
Withdrawn from the concept. Minor operational changes diminished the priority of this element.
- Lighting
Changes if any, to be determined.
- Pedestrian Amenities
Benches, trash/recycling containers, bicycle parking, newspaper racks: to be determined.



**SANTA BARBARA
DOWNTOWN
ORGANIZATION**

ATTACHMENT 5

COPY

October 14, 2009

Jim Armstrong
City of Santa Barbara Administrator
Post Office Box 1990
Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1990

RE: PLAZA DE LA GUERRA RENOVATIONS

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

Since the beginning of the year, the DO has met several times with representatives from the RDA to address proposed renovations of Plaza De la Guerra. The DO Board of Directors endorses the current Plaza de la Guerra General Plan and is supportive of the promise it holds to improve and enhance the plaza.

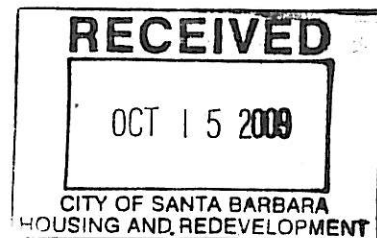
The DO is very concerned however, about the potential for an increase in the number of events that would negatively impact surrounding business and would therefore request an addendum to the current City Hall Policy of Public Events at De La Guerra Plaza. Because it lies in the commercial and economic heart of downtown and considering the negative impacts on circulation, parking and noise that these events can create, the DO would like to be on record as opposed to the closure of De la Guerra Street for any *new* events. Further, we would request that the loop road be closed minimally and that cautionary guidelines be developed that include limiting the number of loop closures to no more than 12 days per year maximum. We believe removal of parking and limiting the use of the loop road (even temporarily) would be counter-productive to the commerce and vitality of the area.

If possible, the DO would like to be involved with the approval process for events/activities that take place at De la Guerra Plaza and we are hopeful that the DO will have an active role in the development of any future plans as well.

Respectfully yours,

Bill Collyer
Executive Director

cc: Nancy Rapp, Director Parks & Recreation
Brian Bosse, Housing and Redevelopment Manager
✓ Marck Aguilar, Redevelopment Specialist
Downtown Organization Board of Directors



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